

TURKEY INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2001

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague from Florida, Mr. Bilirakis, for organizing this special event to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the Turkish occupation of the island of Cyprus.

In 1960, the Republic of Cyprus was formed after the island was granted independence by Great Britain. However, the people of Cyprus enjoyed this freedom for only fourteen short years. On July 20th 1974, sixteen days after our own independence day, Turkish troops invaded and took control of one third of the island nation. The Republic of Cyprus was then divided into two parts—Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus—by a 113 mile barbed wire fence. This present day equivalent of a Berlin Wall remains standing even now. As a result, over 200,000 Greek Cypriots were displaced and forced to flee their homes. To this day, they are not permitted to return.

The Turkish government has made little progress in normalizing any sort of relations with Cyprus. The Turkish government still maintains 35,000 troops on the island, making it one of the most militarized areas in the world. Most recently, the Turkish Cypriot leader refused to take part in talks with the U.N. Security Council about the issue of Cyprus unless his own preconditions were met.

Most disturbing though, the Turkish government is guilty of countless human rights violations against the island of Cyprus, including continued inhuman treatment, harassment, and intimidation. Because of this deplorable human rights record, no other nation besides Turkey itself recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. It is a cruel irony that Cyprus, a nation so rich in history and culture, has been subdued by the most barbaric of methods—unlawful military occupation.

There is a glimmer of hope, though, despite the bleak outlook. The Republic of Cyprus is expected to be brought into the European Union. I hope that with their acceptance into the European Union, Cyprus will once again be able to become a free and united nation. And as a free and united nation, Cyprus will grant stability to a volatile area of the world where the United States has crucial interests.

Mr. Speaker, during my years in congress, I have worked diligently on behalf of the Greek and Cypriot community to help locate family members lost during the Turkish invasion and advocated for the removal of the barbed wire which prevents the restoration of a independent and united Cyprus.

This Congress has let the issue of Cyprus remain quiet for too long. I ask my colleagues to show their strong support for a united Cyprus.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TURKEY INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2001

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 27th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus.

As Greek-Cypriots in America and around the world gathered last week to mark a tragic day in their nation's history, it is proper and fitting that we in this body join them in the hope that peace will soon return to their island nation.

As we gather on the floor of the House to mark the 27th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus, 37 percent of that country remains occupied by Turkish military forces. It is equally unfortunate that five American citizens of Cypriot descent and over 1,600 Greek-Cypriots are still unaccounted for as a result of Turkey's 1974 invasion of Cyprus.

We, in this Congress, have passed resolution after resolution urging Turkey to withdraw its forces from Cyprus. We have passed measures and written letters urging Turkish-Cypriot leaders to renounce "declarations of independence" that they have issued in defiance of international law. And in the United Nations, the United States has consistently and forcefully urged Turkey to end its military occupation of over a third of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

Yet despite these efforts, today, we remain far from a final settlement that will end the artificial division of Cyprus.

It is my belief that Congress has a solemn obligation to speak out and support a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. A solution which must follow the precepts laid down in United Nations Security Council 1250, which was adopted on June 29, 1999 and which in part reads, "... a Cyprus settlement must be based on a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty." In short, the U.S. House of Representatives should serve as a guiding force in the pursuit of a reunified Cyprus, an island nation where all citizens enjoy fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that I am of the belief that the solution to the Cyprus problem resides in the will of the United States and the international community to renounce the violence that divided Cyprus over a quarter century ago and to affirm that the reunification of Cyprus is a priority.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by thanking the Co-Chairs of the Hellenic Caucus, Representatives MICHAEL BILIRAKIS and CAROLYN MALONEY for their exceptional work. I look forward to working with them in the 107th Congress to ensure that some day soon, the unification, not the division of Cyprus, will be commemorated in this body.

TURKEY INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2001

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as I have done every year, I rise again today to reiterate my

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fierce objection to the illegitimate occupation of the island of Cyprus by Turkish troops and declare my grave concern for the future of the area. The island's twenty-seven years of internal division make the status quo absolutely unacceptable.

In July 1974, Turkish troops captured the northern part of Cyprus, seizing over a third of the island. The Turkish troops expelled 200,000 Greek-Cypriots from their homes and killed 5,000 citizens of the once-peaceful island. The Turkish invasion was a conscious and deliberate attempt at ethnic cleansing. Turkey proceeded to install 35,000 military personnel. Today, these troops, in conjunction with United Nations peacekeeping forces, make the small island of Cyprus one of the most militarized areas in the world. Over a quarter of a century later, about 1,500 Greek-Cypriots remain missing, including four Americans.

The Green Line, a 113-mile barbed wire fence, separates the Greek-Cypriot community from its Turkish-Cypriot counterpart. The Turkish Northern Republic of Cyprus (TNRC), recognized by no nation in the world except for Turkey, prohibits Greek-Cypriots from crossing the Green Line to visit the towns and communities of their families. With control of about thirty-seven percent of the island, Turkey's military occupation has had severe consequences, most notably the dislocation of the Greek Cypriot population and the resulting refugees.

Twenty-seven years later, forced separation of these two communities still exists despite efforts by the UN and G-8 leadership to mend this rift between north and south. So far, the UN, with the explicit support of the United States, has sponsored six rounds of proximity talks between the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and Mr. Rauf Denktash, the self-proclaimed leader of the TNRC.

Regrettably, the implementation of any agreements has been thwarted by the intransigent position taken by Mr. Denktash, with the full backing of the Turkish Government. His refusal to participate in the UN sponsored talks until demands for the recognition of Northern Cyprus as a separate state are met is unacceptable. Mr. Denktash has made it clear that his position on the issue is non-negotiable, leaving very little room for progress. In his recent testimony before the Senate Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary Appropriations Subcommittee, Secretary of State Colin Powell specifically singled out Mr. Denktash as the main obstacle in developing a comprehensive solution to the problem.

Impressively, even with this division constantly taking center-stage, the Republic of Cyprus has flourished and grown as an economy and society. Growth has been averaging 6% per year and its per capita income ranks near the top of all developed countries. Its unemployment rate of 3.6% is lower than that of the United States. It is a Europe-oriented nation that is of strategic, economic, and political importance to the region and to the rest of the world.

This success has brought Cyprus to a critical turning point in its history. For the first time, the people of Cyprus have the opportunity to seal their future by becoming part of